

APR 29 1966

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CIA 4/29 NX

BALTIMORE (UPI)--THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) SURFACED IN A U.S. DISTRICT COURT HERE THURSDAY TO CLAIM ABSOLUTE PRIVILEGE FOR ONE OF ITS SECRET AGENTS WHO IS THE TARGET OF A SLANDER SUIT.

THE CIA SUCCEEDED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, IN SLAMMING THE DOOR ON PROCEEDINGS WHICH COULD SHED LIGHT ON SOME OF THE SUPER-SECRET AGENCY'S CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS. JUDGE ROSZEL THOMSON SET MAY 13 FOR ARGUMENTS ON WHETHER HE SHOULD DISMISS THE SLANDER CASE.

THE AGENCY WAS FORCED TO ACT IN PUBLIC WHEN AN ESTONIAN-BORN CANADIAN CITIZEN, ERIK HEINE, 45, OF BENDALE, ONT., SUED JURI RAUS, OF HYATTSVILLE, MD. BOTH MEN ARE MEMBERS OF ESTONIAN EMIGREE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

HEINE CHARGED THAT RAUS TRIED TO RUIN HIS REPUTATION BY PUBLICLY LABELING HIM A SOVIET AGENT.

THE CIA ADMITTED RAUS WAS ONE OF ITS AGENTS, AND SAID HE WAS FOLLOWING ORDERS WHEN HE ACTED TO DISCREDIT HEINE, DESCRIBED AS "A DISPATCHED SOVIET INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE, A K.G.B. AGENT."

A CIA AFFIDAVIT SAID ITS PURPOSE WAS TO ALERT THE ANTI-COMMUNIST EMIGREE ORGANIZATIONS AND TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE AGENCY'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES.

RAUS TOOK THE KLYNESS STAND THURSDAY. BUT LAWRENCE HOUSTON, CIA GENERAL COUNSEL, CLAIMED THE AGENCY HAD ABSOLUTE STATUTORIAL PRIVILEGE IN ORDERING RAUS NOT TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

HOUSTON SAID RAUS ACTED IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST WHEN HE GAVE OUT THE INFORMATION ON HEINE. THE LAWYER ALSO TOLD NEWSMEN THAT IT WAS HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN OPEN COURT SINCE 1952.

RAUS TESTIFIED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED PAYMENT FROM THE CIA BUT HE WAS NOT PERMITTED TO DISCLOSE HOW MUCH, WHO PAID HIM, OR THE MONEY WAS FOR.

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